VA DHCD Residential Sites and Structures (DRSS) Database User Guide & FAQs

Table of Contents

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

November 2024

BASIC INFORMATION:

1. *What is DRSS, and why was it created?*
Answer: The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Residential Sites and Structures Database (referred to as DRSS) is a marketing tool for local governments to advertise sites, parcels, and structures suitable for future residential development, mixed-use development, or redevelopment. Properties listed within the database are submitted by local governments and may be either publicly owned or privately owned, so long as the respective local government is supportive of the property being developed for residential or mixed-use development.

Authorized in 2023 by SB1114, DRSS is a tool to help local governments promote and housing developers identify properties for residential or mixed-use development. Created by DHCD, DRSS highlights prime sites and structures across Virginia suitable for residential development.

2. *What types of properties are included on DRSS?*
Answer: The DRSS system includes properties that are suitable for future residential and mixed-use development. All properties are either (i) publicly owned, (ii) publicly and privately owned, or (iii) privately owned where the owner or owners have authorized the locality to market the structure or parcel for residential development, mixed-use development or redevelopment.

3. *Who can make entries on the DRSS system?*
Answer: Only registered local governments (counties, cities, and towns) can make an entry in the DRSS system. All Virginia localities (counties, cities, and towns) are eligible to access and utilize the database. The DRSS database is free for localities to use. Property owners, developers, and others interested in advertising a property should contact their local government.

4. *I represent a local government and want to add a property. How do I do this?*
Answer: If you are not a registered user in the DRSS system, you will need to register with DHCD first (see **Registration & Login Process,** Question #1). If you are registered, log into your account and then navigate to the *Create* page and follow Instructions for using the DRSS database in the next section.

5. *Who can users and members of the public contact to ask questions or provide feedback on the DRSS database?*
Answer: If your question is about a specific property entry, please contact the corresponding owner/locality as indicated in the property details. Questions about DRSS itself can be directed to drss@dhcd.virginia.gov.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE DRSS DATABASE

Step 1: Register under your locality (see the **Registration & Login Process** section for step-by-step guidance). Contact drss@dhcd.virginia.gov with any questions or issues.
Step 2: Log in under your credentials on the DRSS Login page: [DRSS Login - DRSS (virginia.gov)](#)
Step 3: Add a property: click the button "Create New Listing". Enter all available information in the data fields. Refer to the DRSS Data Dictionary for descriptions of each data field. Make sure to click

"Save/Update Property Listing" to save the information, which will also list the property on the *Public Listings* page.

Step 4: View your listing on your *Locality Index* page by clicking the "Locality Index" tab at the top of the screen.

Step 5: At any time, you may edit a listing from the *Locality Index* page. Click the "Edit" link located to the right of the property listing. Make any changes/updates you need, then click "Save/Update Property Listing".

Step 6: View your listing(s) on the *Public Listings* page: DRSS Listings - DRSS Public (virginia.gov)

REGISTRATION & LOGIN PROCESS

Roles in DRSS
System Administrator (DHCD Staff only)
Profile Manager (local government representative)
- Has access to Locality User Index List
- Can register new Basic Users
- Can create, edit, and delist properties

Basic User (local government representative
- Can create, edit, and delist properties

1. *How can someone become a registered user of the DRSS database?*
Answer: To become a registered user of the DRSS system, an eligible user from a local government must email drss@dhcd.virginia.gov.

Next, DHCD DRSS staff will verify the local government's request for access. Once confirmed, the user will receive an email with their confirmation and randomly generated password. It is highly recommended that the user create a new password upon first log in.

One (or several) person may be designated as a Profile Manager under a locality. Please indicate this in your initial email requesting access. Once the Profile Manager is established, the Profile Manager may add Basic Users under that locality.

   Note: Profile Managers need to be logged in to approve Basic Users (this will come in a confirmation email).

PUBLIC LISTINGS PAGE & PUBLIC SEARCH INDEX FAQs

How to Search for a Property

1. *What information is displayed for a property on the front page of DRSS?*
Answer: Property entries have seven (7) items that display on the front page of a DRSS search. Those are (in order from left to right) the date the entry was created, the Property ID (the unique identifier given to

every property in the database), the Property Name, the Property Address, the locality where the property is located, the Available Acreage, and an image depictive of the property.

2. How does a user search for an entry on DRSS?

Answer: There are two methods to search for properties in the DRSS database. The first is to search by the name or address of a specific property (e.g., "Main Street Centre" or "600 East Main Street"). The second is by filtering properties in the database. A user can search by either the property name/address OR the filter categories, but not both. By selecting one search option, the other is automatically removed from the search bar. To reset the search and switch to another search option, select the "Reset Search" button on the right side of the grey search bar.

3. How does a user search by property name or address?

To search by property name or address, type in the name of the property or property address in the leftmost gray box at the top of the *Public Listings* page. After doing so, select "Submit Search" to search by the inputted term, or select "Reset Results" to reset the search bar.

4. How does a user search by filter categories?

To search using filters, select one of the filter options in the grey search box at the top of the *Public Listings* page. There are five (5) filters users can choose from: whether the property is a site or a structure, the property's size (by acreage), the property ownership, and the location of the property (by locality). Once completed, select "Submit Search" to search by the inputted filters, or select "Reset Results" to reset the search bar.

A user may choose to filter by as many categories they want but cannot select multiple options within filter categories – for example, a user can filter results by ownership AND locality but cannot select multiple localities.

5. Can I search by multiple filter selections – for example, search for properties that are in Arlington County OR Alexandria City, or for properties that are between 5 – 10 acres or 10 – 25 acres?

Answer: Currently, DRSS does not have this capability. Users can only select ONE option presented in a filter.

6. Why would a search in DRSS return no results?

Answers: If a user's search is returning no results, check the following:
-   If the user is searching by the property name/address, make sure that the property's information is correct. Additionally, a user could try searching by part of a property's address (e.g., the street name or zip code) and see if a more general search returns more search results.
-   If searching by filter categories, make sure that the filter categories selected are not too narrow or limited of a search – for example, if a user is searching for a property in the Town of Clifton Forge and returning no results, they could try removing that search criteria and seeing if the search populates.

7. Can I export my results to an excel sheet or to a PDF?

Answer: Currently, DRSS does not have this capability. However, users can print a property page to a PDF similar to any other webpage by using the "print to PDF" feature within the web browser.

8. What order are properties listed in?

Answers: DRSS displays the most recently created and/or edited properties at the top of the database listings.

9. How can I see more information about a property?

Answer: From the *Public Listings* page, to view additional details about a property select the "View Listing" link on the far right of the property entry's row, to the right of the property's picture.

10. How can a user return to their search index after viewing additional property information?

Answer: To return to the main search index after viewing additional property information, a user can scroll to the top or bottom of the property details page. From there, they can:

1) Select "Return To Filtered List" to return to their previous search results; or,
2) Select "Back To New Search" which will return the user to an entirely new search, clearing all their search results, filter selections, and address/names provided.

Both of these options are located at both the top and bottom of the Listing Detail page.

Additionally, to return to the previous results, a user can click the "return" or back button in the top left of their browser window.

6. Who can users and members of the public contact to ask questions or comment on the DRSS database that was not covered in this section?

Answer: If your question is about the DRSS search function, please send an email to drss@dhcd.virginia.gov.

DRSS LOCAL GOVERNMENT USERS FAQs

Locality Index Page

1. What is a property's ID? Where is it displayed for a property?

Answer: Every property in DRSS has a unique Property ID, which is an alphanumeric code that DHCD staff, localities, and public users can use to identify specific properties in the DRSS database. It is automatically assigned when a property entry is submitted in DRSS.

The DRSS Public Search Index on the *Public Listings* page will display an entry's Property ID in the second column on the left within the search results. The Property ID will also display in a similar position in the User's account index.

2. How can a user search for a specific property in their property index?

Answer: DRSS allows for a user to search their property index by the Property ID of an entry. To do so, the user should type a portion or the entirety of the Property ID in the search box at the top of the index. After clicking the "Search" button, the user will see search results that match the provided term.

To reset the index after searching by a Property ID, select the "Reset Search" button to the right of the search box.

3. Is there a limit to how many properties a user can create or have in their index?

Answer: DRSS has no limit on the number of property entries a user or locality can manage through their account.

4. Can users edit their property entries?

Answer: To edit a previously created property, select the "Edit" link in the rightmost column associated with that property's entry. From there, you can edit any of the data fields associated with the property. Once finished, select the "Save | Update Property Listing" button to submit the edits to the DRSS Public Search Index. Alternatively, from the Edit page, if you make a mistake while editing a listing, you can click "Undo Unsaved Changes" to clear any new changes you have made without deleting original information.

5. Can a user preview their entry in DRSS?

Answer: To preview how a property is displayed in DRSS, select the "Public Preview" link in the rightmost column associated with the property entry. DRSS will then display the public preview of an entry – that is, how it appears when individuals perform a search on the DRSS *Public Listings* page.

6. How do I navigate between the Public Listings page, my locality's listing page, and creating a new listing?

Answer: The "Locality Index" tab at the top of the screen will take you to your locality's property listings. From that page, you can click the blue button "Create New Listing". This will take you to the *Create* page. Alternatively, you can "Edit" or preview any of your locality's listings. From the Create page or Edit page, there will be a blue button on the left side of the screen that says "Back to Index List". This will take you to your locality's Property Index.

From the *Public Listings* page, you will not be able to navigate to your *Locality Index* page. You will have to open a new tab/window in your browser, navigate to the DRSS log in page, and once logged in, click the Locality Index tab at the top of the screen.

Create a New Property Listing

7. How can Users create a new property?

Answer: To create a new property, first log in to the registered user account. Next, click on "Create New Listing" via the blue button on the top left of the screen underneath the locality name. From there, a user must complete all required fields and any other fields that they wish to display in the public view.

Once that is completed, a user can publish their property listing to the DRSS database by selecting "Submit Property Listing," located in green box at the top left or at the bottom of the page.

8. Can users save partially completed property entries?

Answer: DRSS currently does not allow users to save partly completed property entries. However, users can edit existing entries (see Question #4 in this section). Additionally, users can reference the DRSS Data Dictionary before creating a property to view what data fields are available and/or required to create an entry.

9. Can users add images to their property entry?
Answer: DRSS allows users to add up to four (4) images per property entry. Users can either add an image when they first create a listing by using the buttons at the bottom of the page, or they can add an image after a property has been listed by editing the listing using the buttons located on the left side of the *Edit* page.

Pictures should have rectangular dimensions and be under 5mb to display properly on the database. Additionally, DHCD recommends users use short file names to describe their pictures, as longer file names may experience difficulties uploading to the database. Photos should be uploaded individually.

10. How can users remove images from a property entry?

To remove an image, navigate to the property edit page, and select the red "Delete" button beneath the image the user wants removed.

11. Are there any restrictions/formatting requirements users need to adhere to when creating property entries?

Answers: DRSS users should adhere to the following data entry requirements when creating new properties. Not adhering to these requirements will result in errors during the property creation process.
- For assessment value, sales price, minimum price per acre, minimum lease rate, and other dollar figures, input the raw dollar value with no special characters and no commas – these figures will format automatically when published on the DRSS Public Search Index. However, you may use decimal places if needed to describe a property's dollar value.
- For contact information, and particularly phone numbers, users should provide a 10-digit phone number with no spaces, special characters, commas, etc. Additionally, users should be mindful about over pasting an extra space after the phone number entry – if there are any extra spaces, DRSS will not recognize the number as a valid entry.
- For the short narrative fields (e.g., Property Description, Zoning restrictions), responses range from 50 characters to 255 characters. Refer to the Data Dictionary for different character limits for specific fields.
- For long narrative fields, responses are limited to 1,500 characters (a character count will display in the bottom right of the answer box for the specific question).

Edit a Listing

12. How can a user edit an existing listing?
Answer: From the *Locality Index* page, click "Edit" on the right side of the property listing you want to edit. Make edits to the listing in the necessary fields. To save the edits, click the green "Save | Update Property Listing" button on the top left or at the bottom of the page. Clicking "Undo Unsaved Changes" will reset the fields to the original information if you have not saved the edits.

13. How can a user remove or delete a property from DRSS?
Answer: By removing a property, you are permanently and immediately removing it from the public and user indexes. DHCD will not be able to retrieve the property information after it is removed. The user will need to create a new listing in order to replace a listing.

To remove a property from DRSS, click on the "Edit" link. On the *Edit* page, the "Remove This Listing" option is displayed within a red box at the bottom of the page. To remove the property, select that button and answer the verification prompts.